

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 305918

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN

SUBJECT: CALL ON UNDER SECRETARY HABIB BY INDIAN MEA
SECRETARY VELLODI: SATELLITES, FARAKKA AND TARAPUR

1. DECEMBER 13 INDIAN MEA SECRETARY VELLODI, ACCOMPANIED
BY AMBASSADOR KEWAL SINGH AND DCM VENKATESWARAN, CALLED
ON UNDER SECRETARY HABIB. NEA DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY
DUBS AND NEA/INS DIRECTOR KUX WERE ALSO PRESENT.

2. SATELLITES. THE MAIN FOCUS OF DISCUSSION WAS ON
VELLODI'S TALKS AT NASA REGARDING INDIAN COMMERCIAL
ACQUISITION OF COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE FOR ITS PROGRAM
AND POSSIBILITY THAT INDIA'S GROUND STATION WOULD TIE INTO
U.S. LANDSAT PROGRAM. VELLODI GAVE RUN-DOWN OF RECENT GOI
DISCUSSIONS WITH FOUR U.S. AND ONE EUROPEAN COMPANY ABOUT
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 305918

POSSIBLE PROCUREMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE. FACT
THAT NASA ATS-6 DIRECT BROADCAST TELEVISION EXPERIMENT
HAD PROVEN SO SUCCESSFUL HAD BEEN SPUR FOR INDIANS TO
FOLLOW ON WITH THEIR OWN SYSTEM, VELLODI EXPLAINED. HE
ALSO INDICATED THAT DECISION ON PROCUREMENT WOULD BE MADE
IN NEXT MONTH OR TWO SINCE INDIANS WOULD LOSE THEIR

FREQUENCY IN NOVEMBER 1980 UNLESS THEY HAD SATELLITE.

3. WITH REGARD TO THE LANDSAT PROGRAM, VELLODI SAID THAT

PREVIOUSLY INDIA HAD BEEN RELUCTANT TO SIGN STANDARD AGREEMENT REQUIRED FOR PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAM BUT HE THOUGHT THAT TALKS WITH NASA PROVIDED POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO PREVIOUS PROBLEMS.

4. FARAKKA. VELLODI AND HABIB ALSO TALKED BRIEFLY ABOUT STATE OF PLAY ON FARAKKA. VELLODI UNDERSTOOD THAT SOME PROGRESS ON SHORT-TERM ARRANGEMENT FOR COMING LEAN SEASON HAD BEEN MADE IN TALKS IN DACCA AND THAT THESE WOULD BE RESUMED SHORTLY. HE STRESSED INDIAN VIEWPOINT THAT GOI HAD BEEN REASONABLE IN OFFERING TO SHARE 50 PERCENT OF WATER IN LEAN SEASON WHILE CLAIMED THAT UP TO NOW BANGLADESH HAD TAKEN UNYIELDING STANCE.

5. WITH REGARD TO MCNAMARA'S RECENT VISIT, VELLODI SAID THAT GOI POSITION WAS THAT FOLLOWING AGREEMENT ON THE SHORT-TERM ALLOCATION OF WATER AND FURTHER GOI-BGD CONSULTATIONS THE POINT MIGHT BE REACHED WHEN EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE WOULD BE SOUGHT SINCE FUNDING OF LARGE SCALE CONSTRUCTION WORKS WAS BEYOND THE FINANCIAL CAPABILITY OF THE TWO COUNTRIES.

6. TARAPUR. BEFORE END OF MEETING, VELLODI BROUGHT UP TARAPUR STRESSING INDIAN UNCERTAINTY ABOUT WHERE THINGS STOOD. DUBS EXPLAINED THAT U.S.G. NOW FACED INTERNAL PROBLEM BECAUSE OF RELUCTANCE BY ERDA TO PURSUE BUYBACK
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PAGE 03 STATE 305918

OPTION. VELLODI SAID THAT GOI WAS GROWING INCREASINGLY NERVOUS AS TIME BEFORE FUEL WAS NEEDED (MAY 1977) WAS GROWING SHORT. HE HOPED THAT PROBLEM COULD BE HANDLED EXPEDITIOUSLY BY USG. HE EMPHASIZED THAT GOI IN PRINCIPLE IS WILLING TO PROCEED WITH THE BUYBACK.
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